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Identical letters dated 23 December 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the following information:

On the morning of Friday, 23 December 2011, the capital of Syria, Damascus, was subjected to two terrorist attacks that were perpetrated by two suicide bombers in two booby-trapped cars carrying more than 200 kilograms of explosives. The targets of the attacks were two Government institutions located in areas where there were many passers-by. More than 50 persons were killed, including soldiers and innocent civilians, and more than 200 were wounded. Buildings in the vicinity, including an orphanage, sustained damage, as did passing and stationary vehicles: there were therefore extensive material losses.

Those two terrorist suicide explosions constitute a new escalation that affirms the involvement of Al-Qaida in the events that are taking place in Syria. There are clear indications that extremist terrorist groups, some of which are linked to Al-Qaida, were involved in the planning and implementation of terrorist operations that have recently targeted civilians, soldiers and State institutions in Syria. Information is circulating about extremist Libyan elements that belong to Al-Qaida who have entered Syria through its borders with neighbouring countries. That information has been confirmed in the course of field investigations that have been carried out by major international media organizations and by public statements made by the leaders of those elements, which have been broadcast by the media. Furthermore, in a statement on 20 January 2011, the Minister of Defence of Lebanon confirmed reports of operations to smuggle into Syria arms and certain terrorist elements that belong to Al-Qaida, who claimed to be from the Syrian opposition. Those movements took place through illegal crossing points between Lebanon and Syria and, in particular, in the Irsal region on the Lebanese border.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations has scrupulously continued to update you, by means of several letters, official statements and bilateral meetings held by the Permanent Representative of Syria to the United Nations, on the comprehensive reform programme that is currently being implemented in Syria. We have also affirmed that terrorist groups are taking advantage of the demands for reform legitimately being made by the Syrian people, to which the Syrian leadership has made a direct response in the form of the

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ongoing reform programme. We have made it clear that there is documented evidence of foreign attempts to undermine stability and security in Syria, particularly through the provision of money, arms and media and logistical support to those armed terrorist groups that abduct and kill citizens, rape women, plant explosives on roads and in densely populated areas, obstruct public highways and randomly strafe public and private institutions with rocket-propelled grenades. That has emerged in the course of the interrogation of many of the persons who have been apprehended for smuggling arms into Syria, as has the existence of organized networks that smuggle arms across the borders to terrorists within Syria. Those terrorists have received enormous quantities of arms from agents, funders and smugglers in certain neighbouring States. We notified you to that effect in the letter we addressed to you on 12 November 2011, to which were annexed lists of the names and nationalities of the aforementioned persons and the type and quantity of arms with which they were apprehended. That letter was issued as document S/2011/707, and in Annex II thereto, we noted that one of the most important sources of support for the armed terrorist gangs in Syria, as uncovered in the course of the pursuit of terrorists, are sophisticated means of communication with which they have been supplied by the intelligence agents of foreign countries with the aim of supporting terrorism and undermining stability in Syria and encouraging armed rebellion against the State. Those agents have helped to facilitate the setting up of armed ambushes in which innocent people are killed, and concealment from anti-terrorism forces.

Ever since events began, the Syrian Arab Republic has taken extreme and unremitting care to share with the Secretary-General its official position on those events, and has repeatedly noted that the presence of those foreign-supported terrorist groups threatens the security and safety of Syrian citizens. We therefore find it strange that those groups have never been mentioned in any of the statements made by the Secretary-General, or in any of the statements, comments and releases issued by the official spokesman on behalf of the Secretary-General or the press office, regardless of our fruitlessly repeated references to the matter.

We draw your attention to the danger of ignoring the acts of armed violence, which have recently become more frequent, that are being carried out by terrorist groups in Syria against both State institutions and Syrian civilians. We note the importance of clearly and unequivocally condemning the acts of violence that are perpetrated by armed terrorist groups in Syria, including the two suicide attacks that were referred to above. The foreign support that is given to those terrorists and the accompanying media and political warfare should no longer be ignored. We underline the fact that the lack of such condemnation has encouraged the armed terrorist groups in Syria, and prompted them to escalate their attacks and murderous operations against civilians and soldiers on the understanding that lack of comment on their undertakings is tantamount to international complicity in their continuation. Here, we should like to mention that such silence is the usual response to the attacks that are being carried out by the so-called "Free Syrian Army", which is effectively a front for an armed terrorist group that is carrying out attacks on Syrian State institutions and Syrian civilians from the territory of a neighbouring State with the knowledge of the Secretary-General and the members of the Security Council. Those attacks include the seizure of seven Syrian aircraft and three technical officers who were returning to their homes: the group has officially and publicly claimed responsibility for those attacks, as well as for blowing up passenger trains, railway lines, and oil and gas pipelines and an attack on the oil refinery in Homs.

Against that background, we should like to note that it has become clear to all that the more Syria promulgates new laws and takes genuine reform measures, and the more the security situation improves on the ground and Syria expresses its readiness to cooperate and its openness to efforts aimed at assisting Syria to resolve the current crisis in the country, the more foreign political and media pressure intensifies and the greater foreign efforts are to intervene in the internal affairs of Syria and the operations of armed groups increase. This became clear after Syria had signed the protocol covering the legal position and duties of the League of Arab States observer delegation which was signed by the Syrian Arab Republic and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and concerned follow-up to developments in the situation in Syria. That delegation did indeed arrive in Damascus, whereupon there was an escalation in efforts to undermine stability and terrorize the population, by means of terrorist attacks against State institutions, the army and Syrian civilians. The most recent of those attacks were the suicide bombings in Damascus, which caused the death of many Syrian citizens and great material damage.

The Syrian Arab Republic is determined to complete the promising programme of reform which it is currently in the full process of implementing, regardless of the presence of terrorist groups in receipt of foreign support which are undermining the security of the State and its citizens, and despite all the feverish foreign pressure and attempts to ensure the failure of that programme and intervene in our internal affairs by all possible means, including the boorish statements, that are inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, which have been made by certain heads of State and senior officials of major powers concerning Syria and its legitimate leadership, quite apart from the public statements that have been made by officials of Security Council member States, calling for the opposition to reject national dialogue and urging those who bear arms not to surrender their weapons and to continue their armed operations within the country against civilian and military targets. Here, I should like, with the deepest regret, to refer to the fact that the number of martyrs from the army and the forces of law and order exceeds 2,000. No mention is made of them in the statistics on the number of Syrian victims that senior Security Council officials hasten to establish and exaggerate in an emotive, whimsical and provocative manner, which are based on undocumented and biased sources.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic was expecting that the Secretary-General of the United Nations would lead the way in clearly and frankly condemning the terrorist attacks that are being perpetrated in Syria by armed terrorist gangs, the most recent of which took place in Damascus in the morning of Friday, 23 December 2011, particularly in view of the fact that the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, issued a press release on behalf of the Council in which he unequivocally condemned those attacks.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative
of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations